
MEMORIAL

OF

COMMANDER CADWALADER RINGGOLD,

UNITED STATES NAVY,

WITH

EXPLANATORY CORRESPONDENCE.

MEMORIAL

OF

COMMANDER CADWALADER RINGGOLD,
UNITED STATES NAVY,

TO THE

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,

PRAYING

TO BE REINSTATED ON THE ACTIVE LIST OF THE SERVICE;

TOGETHER WITH

CORRESPONDENCE

BETWEEN

THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY AND HIMSELF.

WASHINGTON:

PRINTED BY JNO. T. AND LEM. TOWERS.

1856.

TO THE HONORABLE

THE SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

OF THE UNITED STATES, IN CONGRESS ASSEMBLED.

The memorial of Cadwalader Ringgold, a citizen of the State of Maryland, respectfully represents :

That in the year 1819, your memorialist was appointed a midshipman in the Navy, and having passed successively through the several intermediate grades, was, in the year 1849, promoted to the rank of Commander, which he now holds. That during this whole period, no charge or complaint has ever, to your memorialist's knowledge, been preferred against him ; but on the contrary, he has always discharged his duty faithfully, zealously, and, he has every reason to believe, to the entire satisfaction of the Navy Department, and of his commanding officers.

Your memorialist further represents :

That on the 13th September last, he was notified by an official communication from the Honorable Secretary of the Navy, that in pursuance of a recommendation of a Board of Naval Officers assembled under the act "to promote the efficiency of the Navy," approved February 28, 1855, your memorialist was, from that date removed from the "active list," and placed on the "reserved list."

As this letter did not explain the reasons or grounds on which the recommendation of the Board was based, your memorialist, in order to obtain this information, addressed a letter to the Honorable Secretary of the Navy, "requesting to be furnished with a copy of so much of the report made by the Board, as related to himself personally."

In reply to this communication, he received one from the Honorable Secretary, informing him that the Board had "merely reported the names and rank of the officers, who in their judgment were affected by the law, without assigning any reasons for their action, in your, (my) case."

Wishing at all events, to shield, as far as practicable, his reputation from the injurious suspicions to which this action of the Board, sanctioned by the Department, would, if left unexplained, necessarily give rise, your memorialist addressed another letter to the Honorable Secretary, requesting to be informed whether any reports derogatory to him as an officer or man, were on file in the Department, and if so, to be furnished with copies of them.

No answer having been received to this letter, your memorialist addressed another to the Hon. Secretary containing the same request, from the answer to which as well as from rumor, your memorialist infers that the ground on which the recommendation of the Board in regard to himself was based, was that he was considered as disqualified by reason of ill-health, for the efficient performance of his duty. ~~Copies~~

~~of the correspondence between the Secretary and himself are hereto appended.~~

Your memorialist has no desire to exaggerate his merits, but the records of the Navy Department will bear him out in the assertion, that, in the amount as well as in the importance, responsibility, and danger of the sea service performed by him, his professional career will compare favorably with those of any other officer of his rank in the Navy. He is also prepared to establish, by the testimony both of his brother officers, and, eminent medical men, that he is now, and was, at the time of his retirement, by the Naval Board, and for more than a year previous, as fully competent to the efficient performance of all the duties appertaining to his rank, "both ashore and afloat," as he ever was at any period of his life.

Your memorialist alleges, that in the month of July, 1854, while on duty in command of the Expedition to explore the North Pacific Ocean, China Seas, &c., he contracted a disease, while before the City of Canton, and in its vicinity, incident to that unhealthy climate, which in conjunction with the severe remedies administered, did, temporarily, disqualify him for the command, and he was, as he supposed, for a short period relieved from duty. But upon the recommendation of a ~~Medical Board~~ Medical Board, who ~~reported~~ reported him, as permanently insane, your memorialist was most unjustly deprived of his command—that in less than a month, however, his health was intirely restored, and has ever since been unusually good.

From the foregoing facts, your Honorable Body will perceive that, without any fault on his part, and without any good or sufficient cause whatever, your memorialist ~~was~~ by virtue of proceedings to which he was no party, and without any opportunity being allowed him to contradict or explain the testimony upon which the decision of the Board was based, has been condemned to perpetual inaction in his profession, and forever debarred from all hopes of promotion or honorable distinction.

While, therefore, he has no desire to impugn the motives of any one, he owes it to himself, and to the profession to which he belongs, to remonstrate to your Honorable Body against proceedings which, in his judgment, are entirely erroneous.

Wherefore your memorialist prays that your Honorable Body will enquire into all the facts connected with his case, and if the above averments should prove to be correct, that your Honorable Body will take such action in the premises as to your wisdom may seem fit and proper, with a view to his restoration to the full enjoyment of all the rights and privileges appertaining to his rank, and as in duty, &c.

CADWALADER RINGGOLD,

Commander U. S. Navy.

I do without regret and for the best

(No. 1.)

NAVY DEPARTMENT, *September 13, 1855.*

SIR:

The Board of Naval officers assembled under the "act to promote the efficiency of the Navy" approved February 28, 1855, having reported you as one of the officers who in their judgment should be placed on the "Reserved List" on "Leave of absence Pay," and the finding of the Board having been approved by the President, it becomes my duty to inform you that, from this date, you are accordingly removed from the Active Service List and placed on the "Reserved List" on leave of absence pay.

I am, respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

J. C. DOBBIN,

Commander CADWALADER RINGGOLD, *U. S. Navy,*
Washington, D. C.

(No. 2.)

WASHINGTON, *September 20, 1855.*

SIR:

Your official communication of the 13th instant was duly received, informing me that in accordance with the Report of the Board of Naval Officers, approved by the President, I was from that date removed from the actual service list, &c.

From the fact that you have not indicated the grounds of my removal, it may be that I am not entitled to this information. If however, I have the right to know why I have been thus removed, I respectfully request to be furnished with a copy of so much of the report, as may relate to me personally. I take it for granted that the board has assigned reasons in the case of every officer.

Having been an officer of the Navy for more than thirty-five years and much of the time in active service, it does seem to me reasonable that I should at least know the reasons of my removal after having thus served, and as I believe without reproach.

I am, respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

CADWALADER RINGGOLD,

Commander U. S. Navy.

Hon. J. C. DOBBIN, *Secretary of the Navy, Washington.*

(No. 3.)

NAVY DEPARTMENT, *September 22, 1855.*

SIR:

Your letter of the 20th instant has been received.

In reply, I inform you that the Naval Board in accordance with the law under which they were assembled, merely reported the names and rank of the officers who in their judgment were affected by the law,

without assigning any reasons for their action. I am unable therefore to give you the reasons which governed them in their decision in your case.

I am, respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

J. C. DOBBIN.

Commander CADWALADER RINGGOLD, *U. S. Navy,*
Washington, D. C.

(No. 4.)

WASHINGTON, *September 27, 1855.*

Hon. J. C. DOBBIN, Secretary of Navy,

SIR:

I learn by your letter of the 22d instant it is not in your power to comply with my request for so much of the Report of the Naval board, as relates to me, personally. In your official letter to the President upon the subject of the Report recently promulgated, it appears the Board had free access to, and possession of the Records of the Department. A law involving vital principles touching the honor and standing of Naval Officers, whose object is to decide whether an officer, (after a life spent in the profession, without reproach) is in the judgment of his peers, fit for active service, and promotion is, doubtless, a matter that ought to be profoundly considered by said Board and the Executive. It is to be presumed that such a Board, in performing the solemn duties devolved on them, would, in deciding the fate of their comrades, confine their "examinations and judgments" to allegations alone, found on the Records of the Department, and then only, when duly authenticated by the parties preferring them,—the accusers being always understood to be disinterested and honorable men, responsible, publicly and privately, for all they have done.

In view therefore of the grave import of the "act of Congress" and the consequent action of the Board, *as it regards my own case*, I am forced to infer that reports derogatory to me, as an officer or man, are on record at the Department, which must have been placed at the disposal of said Board. There is then, I conceive, no impropriety whatever in asking if any charges of this nature exist, as supposed, and if there be that I may be suffered to inspect and be furnished with copies of them.

I am, most respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

CADWALADER RINGGOLD,
Commander U. S. Navy.

(No. 5.)

WASHINGTON *December 27, 1855.*

SIR:

After the receipt of your letter of the 22d September, in which you declined, for the reasons assigned, to give me the information I requested, in order to shield my reputation from injurious suspicions, to

which the action of the Naval Retiring Board might give rise, on the 27th of the same month I addressed to you a respectful letter requesting to be informed "whether there were any reports on the files of the Department derogatory to me as an officer, or man. I have not yet received an answer to my communication.

I beg leave to call your attention to another subject. Shortly after my return from my recent responsible command, I had the honor to submit a Report, under date 26th Feb., 1855, to you, of the operations of the expedition, before Canton and the adjacent waters, in which, among other things, I complained of the wrongs inflicted on me by Commodore M. C. Perry, then in command of the U. S. N. Forces in the China and Japan seas, and earnestly requested that his conduct in regard to myself might be investigated. Although you have given me repeated assurances that this investigation should be ordered, I am not aware that any steps have been taken in the premises. In the meantime a "Naval Retiring Board" of which Commodore Perry was a prominent member, has virtually deprived me of my commission.

I have never doubted that, had the opportunity been extended to me of vindicating myself against the cruel aspersions attempted to be cast upon me, the results of the "Naval Retiring Board," would have been entirely different, so far as I am concerned.

I am, respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

CADWALADER RINGGOLD,

Commander U. S. Navy.

Hon. J. C. DOBBIN, *Secretary of the Navy, Washington.*

(No. 6.)

(*Extract.*)

NAVY DEPARTMENT, *December 29, 1855.*

SIR:

You allude to the action of the Naval Board, and desire to know whether anything derogatory to your character as an officer or man is on the records submitted to the Board. I am not aware of any charges reflecting upon your integrity and character as a gentleman. The matters upon the record in reference to you while in China, you are familiar with.

You think if you had had "an opportunity of vindicating yourself against the cruel aspersions attempted to be cast upon you the results of the Naval Retiring Board would have been entirely different so far as you are concerned."

I presume you refer to occurrences connected with your detachment from your recent command, and return to the United States.

I repeat what I have said to you in personal interviews, that I have seen nothing connected with that event casting "aspersions" upon your character as an officer or gentleman. The entire action was based upon your alleged mental affliction, and any inconveniences or embarrassment existing in the expedition, so far as you are concerned, has been attributed to that misfortune.

You desired me to have a Board of Surgeons to report upon your present condition of mind. It was promptly done by the Department,

before the meeting of the Naval Board, in pursuance of your wishes, and the report immediately made. A copy of that report was soon thereafter enclosed to you.

I have never considered your detachment as an "aspersion" upon your character by the officer who ordered it. It was based upon the judgment of the Surgeons, who held a medical survey. If their finding were false and malicious, then you have been wronged indeed. I find however this language used by the late Board of Surgeons: "The admissions of Commander Ringgold, as to his mental derangement in China appeared to preclude the necessity of recurring to the incidents involving his return to the United States." Your separation from your command was the natural and proper consequence of the medical survey.

I would Sir, rather administer all in my power to your happiness than add to your troubles by harsh action or seeming indifference. I have no cause, either personally or officially, to persuade me to act otherwise. I shall, in reference to Commodore Perry and yourself, do what a sense of duty dictates.

I am, respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

J. C. DOBBIN.

Commander CADWALADER RINGGOLD, U. S. N.,

Washington, D. C.

WASHINGTON, *January 23, 1856.*

HON. J. C. DOBBIN,

Secretary of the Navy.

SIR: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your communication of the 29th December last. You say you are not aware that there are, on the records of the Department, any charges reflecting on my character as a gentleman, and you intimate, what I had previously learnt from rumor, that the recommendation of the late "Naval Retiring Board," in regard to myself, was based upon the fact that a Board of Survey, held on me in China, in August, 1854, had reported me as laboring under *mental derangement*.

It was not my intention, Mr. Secretary, to trouble you with any further communications in regard to my case. But I think it is apparent from your last letter that, amid the multiplied calls upon your time, you have not found leisure to read my Report of the 26th February, 1855. As you suggest in your late annual report that some means should be adopted to correct any errors into which the Board may have fallen, I preferred, before appealing to Congress for redress, to submit a brief narrative of the facts connected with my illness, and the outrageous treatment of me by Commodore M. C. Perry.

At the same time the Expedition under my command was fitting out, the Squadron destined for Japan, the command of which had been conferred on Commodore Perry, was also in course of preparation. Commodore Perry was anxious that the Secretary should authorize him, in case circumstances should, in his opinion, render it advisable, to take both the Squadrons under his command. Believing that if any such discretionary power was conferred on Commodore Perry he would be sure to exercise it, and thereby delay, if not entirely defeat, my Expedition, I strenuously opposed it. The Secretary sustained me, and my Squadron was made entirely independent of that officer, as you will see from an extract from my instructions hereto annexed, (No. 7.) I perceived with regret that this circumstance, in connexion with an application made for the transfer of two or three officers volunteering for my Squadron, then attached to his own, had produced a decided coldness on the part of Commodore Perry towards me.

Having commenced and, to some extent, successfully prosecuted the explorations which were the object of the Expedition, I deemed it proper to put in to Hong Kong for provisions and to make certain repairs which had become necessary to the vessels of my Squadron. I expected to resume my voyage in a short time, but circumstances entirely unforeseen by me detained me much longer than I had anticipated. The revolution which had convulsed the interior of China was now rapidly advancing to the coast, and threatened the large sea-ports, particularly Canton, with that devastation which had every where marked its progress. Great

alarm consequently prevailed, not only among the native inhabitants, but among all foreigners residing there. In addition to this danger, our commerce in those seas was exposed to another, arising from the numerous pirates with which they were infested. Encouraged by the impunity which the disturbed state of the Empire secured to them, swarms of these desperadoes hovered off the coast, threatening any vessel that approached it. Whether Commodore Perry had or had not foreseen these dangers, is more than I can say,—certain it is, however, that he had failed to provide for them, and that the lives and property of American citizens were left with no other protection than that which could be afforded by a small steamer of one hundred and fifty tons, armed with four 4-pounders, and eighteen men.

Under these circumstances, the acting Commissioner, our Consuls at Hong Kong and Canton, and many American Merchants and citizens residing in the latter city, earnestly solicited that I would not depart with my Squadron until the danger had passed, or some other means of protection was provided. It was impossible for me to resist this appeal, and I determined to remain. It did not escape my attention, when I adopted this course, that the protection of American commerce in the China seas formed no part of the duty assigned to me by the Department, that these seas were within the limits of Commodore Perry's command, and that, in undertaking to perform a task that properly belonged to him, I might possibly wound the susceptibilities of that officer. But I thought an American officer needed no special instructions to protect the lives and property of *American citizens whenever and wherever they are endangered*; and that Commodore Perry, with that magnanimity which I then supposed belonged to his character, so far from viewing my conduct as an unwarrantable interference with his rights, would acknowledge it as a service not only to the country but to himself. At all events I determined to allow no considerations of mere professional etiquette to interfere with the performance of what I thought a sacred duty; and it will ever be a source of grateful recollection to me that the timely arrival of my little Squadron in those seas, at that critical juncture was, under Providence, the means of averting imminent dangers which threatened a number of my countrymen. Its presence alone was sufficient for that purpose; besides this, one of the vessels, the brig "Porpoise," Lieutenant-Commanding H. Rolando was directed to cruise off the coast, in order to afford protection to such American or other vessels as might require it. I refer you to my report of 26th February, 1855, for a detailed account of the services rendered by this vessel. I cannot, however, in justice to Lieut. Rolando, (who is now absent from the country,) refrain from again calling your attention to the activity and gallantry displayed by him in the performance of the duty assigned to him. Not only did he afford efficient protection to our commerce, but in conjunction with a French and Portuguese force, he attacked

and dispersed a fleet of piratical junks which had for some time been committing their bold depredations on the vessels of all nations in those seas. It was also his good fortune, while engaged in this duty, to serve the cause of humanity in rescuing from destruction upwards of five hundred Chinese, who, while emigrating to California, were cast away on some dangerous shoals in the China sea. In confirmation of what I have said on this subject, I refer you to several letters hereto appended, Nos. 8 to 21 inclusive, selected from among many that I received from the most prominent Americans residing at Canton, and one from you, approving my conduct, marked No. 21.

But, however beneficial my stay in those seas may have been to others, it was disastrous to myself. While there I contracted a disease incident to that unwholesome climate, which, aggravated no doubt by unskillful medical treatment, and, I have reason to believe, by neglect; (see extract annexed, No. 22,) and by the strong stimulants and narcotics that were administered, soon reduced me to a feeble state, both of body and mind, and my nervous system was much affected. I was still in this state, but partially restored, when, on the 23d or 24th of July, 1854, intelligence reached me at Canton (near which city my Squadron was anchored) of the arrival of Commodore Perry at Hong Kong, on his return from Japan. I immediately addressed him a note, of which the following is a copy:

UNITED STATES LEGATION,
Canton, July 24, 1854.

MY DEAR COMMODORE: Welcome to Hong Kong. I hear you are all well. I have been detained here upon duty which I sincerely hope will meet your approbation. The times were so momentous, that although I was on the eve of taking my departure, I did not feel at liberty to resist the appeals of our countrymen here, whose lives hung by a thread.

I beg to notify you I shall withdraw my little Squadron on Tuesday morning, pay my respects to you, and render you an account of the course that I have pursued. I presume you will take steps, as soon as you deem proper, to fill my place.

I have been very ill; now feeble. The fleet surgeon insists that I should depart at once. The excitement may prove fatal.

I am, with respect, your obedient servant,

CADWALADER RINGGOLD,
Commanding Expedition to North Pacific, &c.

Commodore M. C. PERRY, *Commanding East India Squadron.*

No answer was returned to this note, which ordinary civility would seem to have required. I call your attention to its date, and ask you to examine whether it contains any marks of "insanity." I do this for this reason: On the night of that day I had occasion to administer to Surgeon Wm. Grier, fleet surgeon of the Expedition, a reproof for a breach of discipline and disobedience of orders, which, in the state of nervous excitability in which I then was, was probably harsher than the occasion re-

quired. On the very next day, the 25th of July, as I afterwards discovered, Surgeon Wm. Grier addressed a letter to Lieutenant Commanding J. Rodgers, my second in command, informing him that I was deranged. No intimation of this, however, was given to me. On the same day, Commodore Perry came to anchor in the Steamer Mississippi, below Whampoa, near my ship. Very soon after, I was waited on by two gentlemen who were strangers to me, but whom Surgeon Grier introduced as medical officers of Commodore Perry's Ship. Supposing their visit was one of ordinary civility, I received them with the usual courtesies; they remained for a few minutes, took a glass of wine with me, and retired.

At the urgent solicitation of Surgeon Grier, who recommended that I should seek, on shore, *a temporary relaxation* from the cares and anxiety incident to my command, I proceeded the next day with my ship to Macao roads.

As this step rendered it necessary that some officer should, in the interval, take charge of my Squadron, I tendered the temporary command to Commodore Perry on the 25th of July. The next day, however, for reasons assigned, I withdrew this offer. On the 28th of July Commodore Perry addressed me the following note:

UNITED STATES FLAG-SHIP MISSISSIPPI,
Whampoa, July 28, 1854.

SIR: I have received your letters of the 25th and 26th instants, and very much regret that the condition of the vessels under your command has been such as to cause so much delay in the prosecution of the legitimate objects of your cruise, and would suggest that it will be necessary, should any further repairs be required on those vessels, that you make application to me as Commanding the United States Naval Forces on this Station, to give such instructions for the examination of said vessels as may be deemed requisite, and I have to direct that no further steps be taken in the proposed alterations and repairs until the usual surveys are held conformably to the regulations of the Navy.

I have directed Mr. Stevens, in command of the F. Cooper, to return and report to you.

Neither the services of his vessel nor of any part of your command are required at Canton. The force actually belonging to the China Station is amply sufficient for all the purposes of protection of American interests in China.

I am, sir, respectfully, your obedient servant,

M. C. PERRY,
Commanding-in-Chief U. S. Naval Forces,
East India, China, and Japan Seas.

Commander C. RINGGOLD,
Commanding United States Exploring Expedition, Macao.

You will perceive that, in this communication, (the first either written or verbal that I had received from him since his arrival,) Commodore Perry assumes that my detention had been occasioned by the repairs to my vessels, whereas I had expressly informed

him, and the fact was notorious, that I had remained for two months, nearly, in the execution of a duty which devolved on him, but which he had omitted to perform, to wit: The protection of the lives of American citizens and their property in those seas. You will also observe that, so far from acknowledging this service, he makes no allusion to the hope I expressed in my note of the 24th, that my conduct, in this particular, would meet his approbation, but rather indirectly censures me for the course I had pursued. Finally you will perceive that, in direct violation of the orders of the Navy Department, he claims the right to control me in the discharge of my duties.

It was not until several weeks after these occurrences that I learnt I was indebted ~~to~~ the visit of the two medical officers above referred to, ~~for~~ the following order, issued by Commodore Perry:

MACAO, August 1, 1854.

GENTLEMEN:

In accordance with the foregoing report and recommendation in the unhappy case of Commander C. Ringgold, you are directed to hold a strict and careful survey upon that officer, reporting the present condition of his health, and suggesting such arrangement as may seem to you most advisable with respect to his return to the United States.

Respectfully,

M. C. PERRY,

Commanding East India Squadron.

Fleet Surgeon DANIEL S. GREEN,

Passed Assistant Surgeon L. G. WILLIAMS,

Assistant Surgeon GERARD ALEXANDER.

You will observe by the concluding words of this order, that so far, at least, as Commodore Perry was concerned, the question of my insanity, as well as my return to the United States, had been already determined on, before the Medical Board had been organized, since he does not consult the Board with regard to the necessity of my return, but only about the arrangements for that purpose. On the 1st August, 1854, the Board made a report, (hereto annexed, No. 26,) signed by all three of its members, (although we have seen that only two of them were present at the survey,) in which they state that "I labored under mental derangement or alienation." They add that "this alienation" had no connection with my bodily health, but that on the contrary it became worse, and "more manifest" as the latter improved, and consequently recommended that I should be sent home. On the same day on which this report was made, Com. Perry approved it, and issued an order hereto annexed, (No. 27,) that I should proceed home; and another to Lieut. Com'g J. Rodgers, his near relation, (whom only a few days previous I had reported as unfit to be trusted with the temporary control of my Squadron,) to succeed me in the command. These proceedings (hereto annexed, Nos. 23 to 27) all bear date, 1st August, 1854. Thus far I had been kept in profound ignorance of them. It seems, however, that some misgivings were felt that this was not quite regular, for the next day, August 2d, Doctor

Grier called at my lodgings and remarked that "I was very ill;" I asked him with some surprise, "in what way;" he answered, "your mind is failing you." As this was the first intimation of the kind I had received, I was overwhelmed with astonishment and alarm, and answered—"my mind failing me! What evidence have you discovered of that?" He said he had seen repeated evidences of it. I asked him to mention one, and he referred to the identical alterations to my vessel, referred to in Commodore Perry's letter 28th of July. The alterations mentioned in this letter had been suggested to me by a very experienced officer of the British navy, whom I had met at Sidney, New South Wales, as very advantageous in an exploring ship. I thought then and still think they were eminently judicious and proper.

Having at that time, however, no suspicions of any design, and placing implicit confidence in Dr. Grier's medical skill, I asked him what course he recommended to me to pursue? he advised me at once "to apply for a Medical Survey, and get relieved from duty." I proceeded immediately to make the application, asking him who ought to compose the Board, adding, "you will be one of them of course;" he answered, no, that would not do as the application was made at his instance. He then named the three Medical Officers, who had already been appointed by Com. Perry—had held what they called a Medical Survey, had made a report, and that report been approved—though, of all this I was entirely ignorant. I accordingly made the application, *which is dated the day after the survey and order of Commodore Perry approving it.* A day or two after the application was made, the same farce that was played on a former occasion, was repeated: Doctors Green and Alexander, and possibly Doctor Williams, (I think to the best of my recollection only the two former,) called and remained a few minutes. Whether they intended this as a survey or not, is more than I can say; at all events, if it was, no new report was made. It was not until some days after, that I was even *verbally* informed of the result of the survey, which bears date, 1st August, and not until August 19th, that a copy of the proceedings reached me.

Such, Mr. Secretary, are the facts connected with this survey, which constitutes the sole foundation of all the proceedings against me. You say "if it be false and malicious I have been wronged indeed;" of its falsity, there is no doubt. I never did, at any time, labor under "mental derangement or alienation," in the sense in which these terms are ordinarily employed—that my nervous system was much deranged, and my mental energies impaired—that I was in a state both of body and mind which rendered a short respite from the fatigue and anxiety incident to my command proper, if not indispensable, I have no doubt; but this is the utmost that could be said. The disorder of my mind was not such as to unfit me for social intercourse, or for ordinary business; I have a distinct recollection of all that occurred at that period, even of incidents of the most trivial character; I en-

joyed the society of my friends, and partook of all their amusements which my bodily strength allowed me to indulge in. I attended to all my private affairs; scarcely a day elapsed that I did not write several letters on professional or private business, some of which were addressed to yourself, and to Commodore Perry. I append several of these letters, written at different intervals during the period of this pretended insanity, (Nos. 28 to 37-43,) I ask you to read them, and to say whether they are the productions of an insane man. If I was insane when these letters were written, I am insane now, and have been so all my life. I have been told that several private letters written by me about this time, have been exhibited as affording evidences of insanity. On the 6th April last, I had the honor of addressing you a communication in which I referred to these letters, and complained of the use that was made of them. I can only add to what I then said, that, although these letters were written in the careless tone of confidential correspondence with intimate friends, and although they may show traces of the visionary state of mind which my disease and the strong opiates under the influence of which they were written, might naturally be expected to produce, nevertheless, I am convinced that, upon examination, they will not be found of such a character as to sustain the charge of mental derangement or alienation.

But supposing I had been as insane as any inmate of a lunatic hospital, was it not evidently occasioned by the disease which racked my system? I am prepared to show by the most conclusive testimony that a disturbance of the mental functions, amounting often to absolute insensibility, or delirium, (and that for weeks at a time,) is one of the ordinary concomitants of the disease, under which I labored in that climate; nay, that some of the officers and men of my own and Commodore Perry's Squadrons, were affected in the same manner in which I was, but in a much greater degree; and yet in the face of these facts, the Medical Board assert that the mental affection under which I labored was prior to and entirely unconnected with my bodily health. The report was as false in its predictions as it was in its statements. After a superficial examination of a few minutes, the Board did not hesitate to predict, with more confidence than a physician who had spent his life in the study and treatment of mental affections would have done after a most careful examination of the symptoms of a patient, "that a restoration of sound intellect cannot be anticipated for some months—" if at all;" and in support of this hypothesis, they say "that I had for several months before exhibited some degree of eccentricity." Now as to the "eccentricity" referred to, as they do not mention in what it consisted, it is impossible for me to say anything about it, except that two of the gentlemen who made this report were entire strangers to me, and all three of them, during the period referred to, were thousands of miles distant from me.

The prediction was completely falsified by the event; with re-

pose and pure air, my bodily health rapidly improved, and if my faculties were ever seriously disturbed, at the end of a few weeks all traces of the affection had disappeared. So much for the falsity of this report, whether it was wilfully false; or, as you express it, "malicious," is a question in regard to which, as my opinion, would not, under the circumstances, be entitled to much weight, I will refrain from expressing any; I prefer simply to state facts, and leave you to draw your own inferences from them. I may, however, be permitted to say, that men who would, in an official document, not only deliberately apply the terms, "mental derangement, and alienation," to my case, but could affirm that it had no connection with my physical health: men who in a solemn proceeding, involving the fate of a brother officer, could prate about "previous eccentricity" which it was impossible for them to know anything about, except from *hearsay*, and who upon suppositions like these could found a prediction, that my complaint, be it what it may, "would be of long duration," and perhaps perpetual, manifested to say the least, but little regard for their private or professional reputations; it may in some degree excuse, though it by no means justifies such conduct, that the Board based their report on information derived from Doctor Grier. If such was the fact, it would explain why that individual declined being a member of the Board, and preferred occupying an outside position, which would enable him to control its decisions, without sharing its responsibility: but this did not authorize the Board to report, *as facts*, what they had and could have no knowledge of; if Doctor Grier's statements were sufficient, the Board might as well have been dispensed with.

Finding, as I have already said, that my health was very much improved, at the expiration of three weeks, I determined to demand a resurvey. Accordingly I addressed a letter, hereto appended, (No. 33,) to Commodore Perry requesting that a medical board should be organized for that purpose. No notice having been taken of this letter, I sought an interview with him, in which I earnestly renewed my application. He thereupon flew into a violent passion, and said: "*You ask for a resurvey; you have talked like a crazy man ever since you have been in my presence.*" Now, Mr. Secretary, supposing this remark to have been true, did this justify his uttering it? Or rather, would it not, be unjustifiable in proportion to its truth? addressed by any one to an unfortunate lunatic, it would be considered unfeeling and inhuman. How shall it be characterized when addressed by a superior officer to his junior? to one subject to his authority, and therefore entitled to his protection! To show what foundation there was for it, I append a copy (No. 32) of a letter which you will perceive bears the same date, with my request for a re-survey. I will add that it was, with others, transmitted unsealed through Commodore Perry to Lieutenant Commanding Rodgers, to whom it was addressed. Throughout the whole interview his manner and his remarks

were of the same offensive character. I confess it required all the habitual self-control which many years of discipline can alone create, combined with the reflection that I was in his power, and that any manifestation of temper on my part, however natural, would only give color to his assertion, to enable me to bear with treatment at once unjust, oppressive, and insulting.

It is hardly necessary to add that my demand for a re-survey was rejected. Nevertheless Commodore Perry sought to create the belief that such a re-survey was not only ordered but held, and a report made. Some time prior to this application for a re-survey, I requested to be permitted to return home *via* California, (letter No. 31.) instead of around the Cape of Good Hope, by which I had been ordered to proceed. Commodore Perry, not feeling authorized, as he said, to modify the report of the Board, addressed a note to the members informing them of my request, and inquiring whether, if convened as a Board, they would advise this change in my route. In reply to this note the Surgeons wrote another, simply stating that they saw no reason why the request could not be granted. In a letter to the Department, dated September 5, 1854, transmitting the proceedings under the survey, Commodore Perry affects to consider this note as a *re-survey*, and says: "I herewith transmit duplicates of first and second surveys in the case of Commander Ringgold," and this in the face of the fact, that only a few days before, he had positively denied me such a survey, and that in his note dated 30th August, informing me that my request for a change of route was acceded to, he does not say a word about such a re-survey. Copies of these proceedings are hereto appended. (Nos. 38, 39, 40, 41.) I have reason to believe that, before the "Naval Retiring Board," this note was insisted on as a re-survey, and contributed not a little to the result.

All my efforts to obtain a re-survey having been ineffectual, I determined to protect myself, as well as I could, against what I now considered a deliberate design to ruin me. On the eve of my departure for San Francisco, I therefore addressed a letter to Dr. Messersmith, the surgeon of the *Susquehanna*, giving him the history of my case from the commencement, requesting that he would observe me closely during the voyage to see whether he could discover in me any symptoms of derangement, and to give me the result when I left the ship. I annex copies of this correspondence which I transmitted to the Department on my arrival in New York. (Nos. 42, 43, and 44.)

You will perceive that Dr. Messersmith says, in conclusion, that "*I am satisfied your health now, in every respect, is unimpaired, and precisely such as it had been before your attack of fever in China.*"

It is hardly necessary, Mr. Secretary, to recapitulate my efforts since my return home to procure a fair and impartial investigation of my case. Immediately on my arrival, I laid the whole case before you verbally and in writing, urgently soliciting a

speedy and thorough inquiry into my conduct while in command of the Expedition, and into all the circumstances connected with my illness and the deprivation of my command. From that time to the present I have never ceased my importunities.

After the most unremitting exertions on my part that some means might be adopted of inquiring into the fact of my alleged insanity, in order that it might either be definitely ascertained, or the cloud which the imputation had cast over my professional prospects forever dispelled, you finally consented to convene a Medical Board for that purpose. The precept hereto annexed (No. 45) sets forth the report of the survey held in China, and concludes by directing them to "report to the Department the present state and condition of his (my) mind." That Board composed of three of the most eminent surgeons in the Navy, selected by yourself—*assembled*. They devoted to the investigation *more hours* than the first Board did *minutes*. That time was spent not in the ordinary chit-chat of a morning call over a glass of wine, but in the most searching scrutiny of my thoughts and actions ever since the insanity was said to have existed. The result of the inquiry was a report (hereto, No. 46,) which concludes thus: "*The undersigned could detect nothing in the manner, conduct, or language of Commander Ringgold which would convey or sustain the idea of existing mental derangement.*"

As regards the admissions you mention as having been made by me to the Board touching my mental derangement in China, I have only to say that I made no admissions that I have not made in my report of February 26, 1855, and, both, in repeated conversations, and in this communication, to yourself, to wit: That in consequence of my illness I was for a brief period disqualified both in mind and body to discharge the duties of my command. That in my account to the Board I took the same view of the proceedings in China that I now do, is evident from the following passage in their report, to wit: "*In the prolonged conversation held with Commander Ringgold, the undersigned could detect no evidence of insanity; his narrative was continuous and connected; his manner natural, though displaying occasionally a deep and abiding sense of injustice and injury, into the foundation of which it was not felt incumbent upon us to inquire. Considering our investigation confined to his mental condition, and not as embracing his relations as an officer of the Navy.*"

I flattered myself that this report was conclusive and fully established my entire competency to resume my professional duties whenever occasion might call for them. I understood you to say, unequivocally, both before and after the Board was convened, that such would be its effect. I think the same inference was fairly deducible from your letter, (hereto annexed, No. 47,) informing me of the result of the investigation. In fact, if the Board was not called for this purpose, for what purpose was it called?

But a new difficulty now arose: Only a few days after this report was made, the "Naval Retiring Board," organized to

carry into effect the act "to promote the efficiency of the Navy," of which Commodore Perry was a member, assembled.

Knowing that, in my whole professional career, there was nothing that malice itself could lay hold of except the ridiculous and now exploded story of my insanity, and not supposing it possible that, on this point, the Board would venture to go behind a medical survey so recently made, and which had been approved by yourself, I entertained no fears for the result. But I was mistaken. In opposition to this medical survey, and to the notorious and unanswerable fact that I was and had been, at least ever since my return to the United States, in the perfect possession of all my faculties, the Board, with the first and SECOND SURVEY, held in China before them, determined that I was incompetent, by reason of insanity, to discharge my duties. Even with the one-sided view of the case which the evidence before them allowed them to take, the decision appears to me incomprehensible; but I entertain no doubt that, if the Board had read Dr. Messersmith's letter—if my report of 26th February, 1855, then on file at the Department, had been laid before them, and if the letters hereto appended, and other evidence I could have adduced to contradict the report had been heard by them, the decision would have been very different. The result only proves, what all experience has demonstrated, that any attempt to administer justice without hearing both sides must inevitably lead to injustice, if not to absurdity.

Such upon the honor of an officer are the circumstances of my case; the substance of them is this: While in the performance of my duties, in an insalubrious climate, I contracted a disease which was attended by a slight disturbance of my mental functions. Whereupon an officer who had no right to interfere with me and my command, convenes a Board, which, after a very brief and superficial examination, bearing upon its face the evidence of, to say the least, extreme carelessness and haste, report me as permanently insane. The same officer approves this finding, orders me home, and transfers my command to another, that other, his near connection, and one whom but a few days previous, I had reported to him as unfit for the command, even for a few days. All this was done on one and the same day. In a short time finding my health very much improved, I demand a re-survey. My demand is treated with contempt and rudeness. The surgeon of the ship, in which I return home, certifies, that whatever mental disorder I may have experienced, was clearly the result of my illness, and ceased with returning health. On my arrival here I lay my case before the Department. I protest against the proceedings which had deprived me of my command. I offer to prove that I have been treated with harshness, perhaps with willful injustice, and I earnestly entreat that all the facts connected with my case might be investigated. This request not being granted, I ask that, at least, the re-survey, which had been denied me in China, be accorded me here. After multiplied difficulties and delays that re-survey

is ordered, and the report made by three eminent Surgeons, fully establishes my entire sanity. Whereupon another Board, not one of the members of which was a physician, not one of whom knew anything about my state of health, quietly, secretly, without my knowledge, report me as incompetent, by reason of insanity, for the performance of my duties, and strange to say base their report on the original survey, which it was the very object of the last one, to revise and correct.

I question, Mr. Secretary, whether the records of your Department can furnish a case parallel with this. It is so peculiar in its circumstances that it appears to me it will justify a departure in my favor from any course you may have prescribed for yourself in regard to the officers comprised in the report of the late "Naval Retiring Board."

I have the honor to be,

Most respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

CADWALADER RINGGOLD,

Commander, United States Navy.

The following Extracts were furnished through the courtesy of the Hon. W. L. MARCY, since the Memorial went to press :

DEPARTMENT OF STATE,
WASHINGTON, *February 20, 1856.*

SIR :

I have to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of yesterday, and in reply, to transmit to you, herewith, an extract from a despatch of the 4th of July, 1854, from Dr. Parker, and an extract from a despatch of the 18th of November, of the same year, from Mr. McLane, in which mention is made of your services to the American community at Canton, at a time when they were greatly needed in that quarter.

I am, sir, respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

W. L. MARCY.

Capt. CADWALADER RINGGOLD,
United States Navy.

Extract.

CANTON, *July 4, 1854.*

SIR :

"Much solicitude was entertained for the public tranquility for several days subsequently to the 20th ult., and consequently Commodore Ringgold, to the great satisfaction of his countrymen, returned to Whampoa with the U. S. Ship "Vincennes," and the U. S. Steamer "John Hancock" came to Canton. The manner in which Commodore Ringgold has responded to the appeals of citizens of the United States in their trying emergencies, notwithstanding the obstacles in his way, entitle him to the highest praise and their warmest thanks."

With sentiments of distinguished consideration, I have the honor to remain, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

PETER PARKER,

Secretary U. S. A. Legation, &c.

Hon. W. L. MARCY,
Secretary of State.

Extract.

U. S. LEGATION SHANGHAI, *November 18, 1854.*

SIR :

"In transmitting this correspondence, between Dr. Parker and Commander Ringgold, I embrace the opportunity to assure you that the American community at Canton feel that to Commander Ringgold is due their highest praise and gratitude for the prompt and efficient protection he extended to them, at a moment of extreme peril and danger."

I have the honor to remain,

With great respect,

Your obedient servant,

ROBERT M. McLANE.

To the Hon. WILLIAM L. MARCY,
Secretary of State, Washington City.

the country of the ...

February 20, 1880

and ...

W. L. MARY

January 4, 1880

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(No. 7.)

Extract from letter of "Instructions."

"The expedition under your command having been organized for a special object, under a separate law of Congress, it is hereby enjoined upon all Officers of the Navy senior to yourself, not to interfere with your command, by exercising any control over the vessels, their officers or crews, or by diverting them from the service to which they have been assigned—unless under the most urgent circumstances—and you will on meeting with a senior officer explain to him the nature of the enterprise in which you are engaged, and if called for, show him the letter of instructions."

(No. 8.)

CONSULATE OF THE UNITED STATES,
Hong Kong, May 31st, 1854.

SIR :

With reference to the enclosed notice in the *Hong Kong Register* of the 30th instant, respecting the attack made by Piratical Junks upon the Dutch vessel *Paul Johan*, I have the honor to inform you that the agents for the owners of the American ships *Valparaiso* due from Calcutta, and *Niobe* from Bombay, April 7th, also due, have expressed to me that they entertain serious fears lest the same fleet of Junks may have fallen in with them, as they would likely come in the same course.

If it be in your power to despatch a vessel to look after their safety, you will consider the need of so doing—I feel assured that such a step would give the highest satisfaction to the American community in China.

Although these particular vessels might not be fallen in with, yet such a movement on the part of any American man-of-war, would, in my opinion, as well as in the opinion of others, be attended with much benefit; and the Chinese, who have doubtless their spies here, would learn that American vessels of war will at once redress any injury done to American shipping or American interests.

Asking your early consideration of the above, I would conclude by remarking, that it will afford me great pleasure to communicate to the American community in this part of China, what course you may determine upon.

I am, sir, very respectfully,

Your most obedient servant,

JAMES KEENAN,
Consul of the United States.

To Commodore CADWALADER RINGGOLD,
Commanding U. S. Surveying Squadron.

(No. 9.)

UNITED STATES SHIP VINCENNES,
Hong Kong, June 1, 1854.

SIR :

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of yesterday, respecting the late piratical attack upon a certain dutch vessel (the

particulars of which, in the *Hong Kong Register*, 30th instant, were omitted, although you mention having enclosed them) and the apprehension of the agents of the American ships *Valparaiso* and *Niobe*, lest they, in their routes from Calcutta and Bombay, have been molested.

The expedition under my command was equipped and despatched for special purposes; and except in cases of great emergency, I do not feel myself justified in taking active part in the duties pertaining to our Squadrons sent forth for more general purposes.

The vessels under my command at this moment are all undergoing important repairs, preparatory to immediate and exposed service. When they, or any one of them, are ready, should Commodore Perry or any of his Squadron, not arrive here, I will stand prepared to despatch a vessel to the immediate locality reported as infested with pirates, and use every exertion to protect our enterprising citizens, and bring to summary justice these lawless bands of freebooters, that give much uneasiness to commerce.

I request to be furnished with a copy of the *Register* containing the particulars of the late outrage, with any subsequent information you may be in possession of. It will be highly advantageous to be fully posted with regard to the locality and whereabouts of the pirates.

I am, very respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

CADWALADER RINGGOLD,

Commanding Expedition to North Pacific Ocean.

TO JAMES KEENAN, Esq.,

United States Consul, Hong Kong.

(No. 10.)

LEGATION OF THE UNITED STATES,

CANTON, 6th June, 1854.

SIR: His Excellency Robt. M. McLane, on leaving for the North, conferred upon me full power to act in his name for the current calls that may be made upon the United States Legation, in His Excellency's absence, &c., &c.

Thus authorized, acting in his name and in behalf of the public interest, I beg to state that a communication addressed you by the Merchants of the United States at this city, under date of the 5th instant, has been handed me, for perusal, with an intimation that it will be agreeable if I would second their applications for assistance, by my addressing you also.

According to the last information I am able to obtain the Imperial authority, if not subverted, is at least in a State of abeyance, in nearly half of this Province, (not to allude to other parts of the Empire,) and anarchy and misrule seem daily approaching nearer and nearer, to this City, and in the immediate vicinity of Whampoa the anchorage of Foreign shipping, all the atrocities of civil war are being experienced. It is intimated a thousand lives have already been sacrificed, and hundreds of women and children are homeless.

Indications are becoming more and more manifest of *concert* of action on the part of the mal-contents in different districts, and under the influence of a common contempt for the existing Government, it is im-

possible to foresee how soon a general revolution in the provinces may be attempted.

Under these circumstances, the apprehension of our Merchants is well grounded, and in the absence of Commodore Perry, they very naturally look to you for succour. If consistent with your plans, and your views of public duty, you can detail one of the vessels under your command, *temporarily*, to anchor at Whampoa, it will be a source of increased security to the citizens and commerce of the United States, and in the event of an outbreak at this City, which *may* occur any day, the presence of such a vessel will be doubly important.

I have the honor to be, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

PETER PARKER,

Secretary of the United States Legation, &c.

Commodore C. RINGGOLD,

*Commanding the U. S. Exploring Expedition
in the East, U. S. S. Vincennes, Hong Kong.*

(No. 11.)

CANTON, *June 5, 1854.*

SIR:

The undersigned American Merchants residing at this place and representing the interests of many absent parties who are citizens of the United States feel constrained, by the present unusual state of popular feeling here and at Whampoa and by the generally threatening aspect of affairs, to solicit from you such additional protection as the forces at your command may enable you to afford to these imperiled interests.

It has long been apparent to residents, that the government of this portion of the country, although more vigorous than at other points, was gradually losing its *prestige*; but latterly the banks of this river have become the scene of the most dreadful atrocities, originating in a local quarrel of old standing, but in the present case attended by aggravations of the most serious nature arising from the employment of mercenaries of the vilest character, until such is the apparent hostility of the attitude assumed by these large bodies of disorderly persons, all persons, whether native or foreign, are impressed with a dread of them, and it may be said that not only a large amount of American property in shipping and goods, at or between this City and Whampoa, but American lives, also are in serious danger.

It is the duty of the undersigned therefore, to request you to take such measures in affording additional protection to these American interests as in your own good judgment may appear requisite and adequate to avert the dangers which are now so imminent.

Respectfully requesting your prompt action,

We are your countrymen and obedient servants,

HENRY W. HUBBELL & Co.,
AUGUSTINE HEARD & Co.,
NYE, BROTHERS & Co.,
WETMORE & Co.,
RUSSELL & Co.,
KING & Co.

To Commodore RINGGOLD,

United States Navy, &c., Hong Kong.

(No. 12.)

UNITED STATES SHIP VINCENNES,
Hong Kong, June 9, 1854.

SIR:

Your letter of the 6th instant, accompanying a strong appeal from the highly respectable American Merchants at Canton for assistance, and protection in the present pressing and threatening emergencies, at Canton and Whampoa reached me yesterday.

From the general aspect of affairs, and the revolutionary and piratical movements that we hear of from every quarter of the Chinese Empire, I am entirely convinced of the anarchy and confusion that exist, and of the necessity of protection to our citizens.

I feel it my duty to apprise you, that I am acting under special orders from the Navy Department, and except in self defence, or in extreme cases, I am not permitted to take any part in affairs not strictly pertaining to my duties. I am now here with my squadron, diligently equipping and making repairs preparatory to a more important duty, in the Japan and contiguous seas, pending the coming season. I have looked with much anxiety for the advent of Commodore Perry, or a portion of his squadron on their return from Japan. The "Queen" I understand was assigned to the duty of protecting American interests at Canton, in the absence of the distinguished officer commanding the East India and China squadron; but if during my stay here, and in the event of the protracted absence of Commodore Perry, I can render assistance and give protection to our good and enterprising citizens at Canton or Whampoa, by the presence of my ship pending any outbreak, or extreme exigency, I will not only feel pleasure, but I esteem it to be *a duty*, and that no justification will be necessary for a partial deviation and departure from my other duties. I therefore abide further advices from you, and if from any renewed apprehension of yourself and the Merchants, you deem the presence of a ship of war essential to the interests or lives of our countrymen, at Whampoa, I pray you to dispatch an express, and I will proceed forthwith with my ship to Whampoa with the assistance of steam power. This done Commodore Perry may then opportunely arrive which will relieve me from the duty attending my visit at Whampoa, and leave me free to pursue my own pressing duty.

I request the favor of you to communicate with, and impart to the Merchants who joined in the memorial, the contents of this letter with my respects, and to forward the enclosed letter in reply.

I am, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

CADWALADER RINGGOLD,

Commanding Exploring Expedition to the China Seas, &c.

DR. PETER PARKER,

Secretary United States Legation, Canton.

(No. 13.)

UNITED STATES SHIP VINCENNES,
Hong Kong, June 9, 1854.

GENTLEMEN:

I have had the honor to receive your communication of the 5th inst., yesterday, informing me of the critical and threatening state of

affairs at Canton, Whampoa, and the provinces contiguous, and the urgent necessity of efficient protection of not only the interests of, but the persons of our enterprising citizens, and requesting me in the absence of Commodore Perry, to extend assistance to them. I have written Doctor Parker on the subject, and have requested him to acquaint you with the course, which under the circumstances, I deem proper to adopt. I trust you will believe I am fully alive to the welfare and defence of all our citizens, and in the absence of Commodore Perry, I will not fail to extend to them the protection which emergencies may demand, and not too far conflict with my own pressing and peculiar duties.

I am, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

CADWALADER RINGGOLD,
Commanding Exploring Expedition to the China Seas.

Messrs. NYE BROTHERS & Co., RUSSELL & Co., and others, Canton.

(No. 14.)

UNITED STATES SHIP VINCENNES,
Whampoa, June 12, 1854.

SIR:

I have the honor to inform you of my arrival here this morning, in compliance with the urgent appeals of yourself and the very respectable American merchants contained in your communication of the 6th inst.

From information received, I did not delay to hear further from you, as I had intimated I would do in my note to you, under date of the 9th instant, deeming it my duty to proceed with my ship forthwith to Whampoa. My time is limited, and my engagements pressing; I have, therefore, to request that an early moment may be appointed, when I can meet yourself and the Merchants and American citizens in conference, the better to ascertain your views with respect to the crisis at hand, and the course proper to be adopted under the circumstances.

I shall await your answer on board at this place.

I am, sir, most respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

CADWALADER RINGGOLD,
Commanding Exploring Expedition to China Seas.

To DR. PETER PARKER,
Secretary of the United States Legation, Canton China.

(No. 15.)

CONSULATE, U. S. A.,
CANTON, June 14th, 1854.

SIR:

Returning from Macao yesterday, after a week's absence from town, I was gratified to find that in answer to a request from the American

Merchants resident here, you had so promptly responded to their call for protection from an apprehended attack of lawless Chinese, (known to be creating disturbances in this immediate neighborhood,) by bringing the U. S. Ship Vincennes immediately to Whampoa.

I shall be glad if the special service for which your Squadron is designed will allow it, that you remain with us till the return of Commodore Perry from Japan, may allow of a permanent arrangement for the protection of American interests near this place. Such as has already been expressed to you verbally, is the earnest wish of our countrymen resident here.

It is their belief, as it is mine, that the present Government of China is daily losing its influence and control over its subjects. The progress of the organized rebellion against the reigning Dynasty is made known to us through the medium of the public press. Thus far, the efforts of the insurgents have been confined principally to the provinces north of this, but their emissaries in this city are believed to be numerous, and a revolution may be attempted here at any moment. When this occurs we have much to fear from the attacks of desperadoes known to be near us, ready to avail of any opportunity for riot and plunder. In such case it is to Foreign Navies only that we can look for protection and defence, and we shall have abundant reason for self-congratulation, if you, or any portion of the force under your command, shall then be near at hand. At the same time I have great satisfaction in stating that the emergency which called for the address to you on the 5th instant, has passed away; the disturbances near Whampoa have been temporarily suppressed, and I think that for a few days to come, there need be no apprehension of danger to Foreigners in Canton.

Under these circumstances I believe that it is in your power to render an immediate public service, beneficial to the maritime interests of all nations trading to China, reflecting honor to yourself and officers, and credit to the Flag of our Country, and requiring but a short absence of your ship from her present anchorage.

It is well known that a large piratical fleet has long hovered near the entrance to Canton river, and within a few weeks their efforts to capture merchant vessels have been numerous, and partially successful. From communications made to me on the 12th instant, I have reason to believe that the present rendezvous of a large portion of this fleet is known to his Excellency the Governor of Macao, and a young, but very gallant officer of the Portuguese Navy, (Captain Carvalho,) has informed me of his desire to meet you with reference to a combined attack upon it. I did not learn from him the precise location of this rendezvous, but believe it is within one hundred miles of Macao; and from conversation with the leading American Merchants in Canton, I am satisfied that it is their wish that you should communicate with him, and attempt the destruction of the fleet alluded to. At this moment there are American ships with valuable cargoes overdue, and we are not free of apprehension that they are now in their hands.

Apart from this, the general interests of our countrymen in these seas have been increased during the past year, by the establishment in China of branches of the principal Insurance Companies of New York and Boston.

Believing that this service may be performed within a very brief space

of time, and that during that time there is no imminent danger to American interests here, I would ask your attention to the subject.

I am very respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

D. N. SPOONER.

U. S. Vice Consul.

To CADWALADER RINGGOLD, Esq., *Commanding U. S. Expedition to the North Pacific Ocean, &c., &c., &c.*

(No. 16.)

LEGATION OF THE UNITED STATES,
Canton, June 15, 1854.

DEAR SIR:

I cannot allow you to leave this port without an expression of my sense of the obligations you have imposed by the promptness with which you hastened to the protection of the interests of the Merchants and citizens of the United States, at a moment of apprehended danger. Notwithstanding the many demands upon your attention preparatory to the execution of the important duty assigned you by your Government; notwithstanding the difficulties in your way, from the nature of that service and the tenor of your instructions, and your extreme unwillingness to transcend the limit of your own peculiar duties, you at once surmounted every difficulty and speedily complied with the urgent appeals that had been addressed you.

Fortunately on your arrival with your flag ship at Whampoa, near the arena of fire and slaughter, the immediate prospect of those disturbances extending to the provincial city, had become less alarming, and reasonable hopes were inspired that the gentry who had sent thither a large delegation will succeed in accomplishing what the Government had failed to effect, and that the emergency in view of which your aid was solicited is at least deferred. Yet the course you have taken entitles you to the highest commendations, not only of your fellow-countrymen in China, but also of the Government you serve.

Relying with satisfaction upon your readiness, should imminent danger threaten the lives and property of citizens of the United States, while you remain in these waters, that in the continued absence of Commodore Perry, you will again hasten to their succor.

With sentiments of distinguished consideration and esteem,

I have the honor to be, dear sir,

Very respectfully your obedient servant,

PETER PARKER,

Secretary of the U. S. A. Legation, &c.

Commodore CADWALADER RINGGOLD,

Commanding Expeditions N. P. C. Sea., U. S. S. Vincennes.

(No. 17.)

Extract.

CANTON, June 17, 1854.

MY DEAR SIR:

"My opinion is now as it was before expressed that you will render most signal service by attacking the pirate fleet, and on return from

that cruise, come and remain with us until Commodore Perry arrives if you can do so."

Very truly, yours,

D. N. SPOONER.

Commodore RINGGOLD, &c.

(No. 18.)

(*Extract.*)

SHANGHAE, June 26, 1854.

MY DEAR SIR:

I have your favor of the 9th June, with endorsements.

I shall take much pleasure in making known to the President and Department of State, how much the entire American community in China, are indebted to you for the enterprise and promptitude, exhibited by you in proceeding to Whampoa, to render such protection as may be necessary in the present unsettled condition of affairs in China.

Very truly yours,

R. M. McLANE.

To CADWALADER RINGGOLD, U. S. N.,
Commanding Exploring Expedition.

(No. 19.)

LEGATION OF THE UNITED STATES,

Canton, July 10, 1854.

DEAR SIR:

So unequivocal are the indications that an insurrection may break out at this city at any hour, I deem it my duty to communicate with you without delay, and to request you will send such aid as you have at your disposal to co-operate with the naval forces already off the factories in protecting the lives and property of citizens of the United States should the same, unfortunately, become necessary.

Consonantly with our previous understanding, Captain Taylor proceeds immediately to Whampoa, with the Steamer "Queen" under his command, for the purpose of conveying to this city such force as you may be able to furnish.

It is the conviction of such of our merchants as I have been able to confer with this morning that the coming night should not be passed without a marine guard on shore. One of the most alarming features, at the present time, is the apprehension that it enters into the plan of the revolutionists to call in the aid of *fire*—a foe more formidable to foreigners than all the rebels of China. With regard to the accommodation of the men you may send, I think that "chap boats" will be the best, and they can easily be obtained either here or at Whampoa, as you may prefer. One or two at least might be employed at Wham-

poa to bring provisions, &c., and the remainder at Canton. But please to receive these as suggestions.

Respectfully submitted:

I have the honor to be, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

PETER PARKER,
Secretary U. S. A. Legation.

Commander C. RINGGOLD, &c., &c., &c., *Whampoa.*

(No. 20.)

CONSULATE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,
Canton, July 27, 1854.

SIR:

I am favored this morning with your communication of yesterday's date, advising that the "Hancock," with the detachment of men from the "Vincennes," would be withdrawn from Canton, Commodore Perry having sent up a detachment for the protection of American citizens resident here.

I also take special note of your intention to keep your Squadron actively employed in the pursuit of pirates, but that you tender the service of the "Porpoise" for our protection here if I desire it, and that the crews of the "Hancock" and "Porpoise" will be available here if needed, while those vessels are undergoing repairs at Whampoa.

At the moment we have a detachment of seventy sailors and marines from the "Mississippi," and understand that the ship herself will soon again be at Whampoa. This would seem sufficient for our protection, but the whole country surrounding Canton is in a state of rebellion, and the river below this and Whampoa is infested with pirates, to the embarrassment and almost destruction of the trade of the place.

In this state of things we cannot foretell occurrences from one day to another, and the bare presence of a naval force may be sufficient to overawe and keep in check the lawless vagabonds in our vicinity who we know are ready to fight and plunder either natives or foreigners as opportunities may offer. For this reason it is highly desirable that any portion of the force under your command be stationed at Whampoa, or off the factories whenever and as often as their services are not needed elsewhere.

But I understand your communication under acknowledgment is to be taken in connexion with your letter of 24th instant to the American firms established here, a formal notice of the withdrawal from Canton of the forces under your command, and the transfer to Commodore Perry and the ships of the East India Squadron of the responsibility of the defence and protection of American interests here.

It is therefore my pleasant duty to offer my thanks for the valuable services rendered by yourself with the ships and crews of the surveying Squadron to this date. For the past fortnight, more particularly while the native population of this city have been fleeing from it by hundreds, from fear that the horrors and evils of a civil war, and more particularly the excesses of a lawless band of rioters and thieves might be visited upon themselves and families, the citizens of the United States here resident have dwelt and slept in conscious safety, aware

that the force above alluded to was watchful, and would be prompt to act in their defence.

But in thanking you for granting this force for our defence, I am mindful that, in so doing, you have incurred an extraordinary responsibility that of deviating from the duties to which it was assigned, in fact *for which* it was originated, a Squadron for surveying purposes, fitted by our Government at great expense, and placed under your command in expectation that, under your direction, its energies for the purposes indicated would be fully developed.

This has been often the theme of respectful discussion and consideration by my fellow-merchants here. We believe that naval commanders can only be justified by great emergencies for deviating from the duties assigned them, but we believe that that emergency had here arisen. In proof of this, I may briefly allude to the earnestness with which respectable Chinese, believing their own government utterly incapable of protecting either themselves or foreigners, besought me on the 19th ultimo to request your presence here. We believe that your response has been the agent of our safety and peace, and, in expressing to you our sense of the obligations we are under to you, I would add the earnest wishes of myself and countrymen for your speedy restoration to health, and for your success and distinction in the Naval service of the United States. The value of this branch of our country's service, we who are resident in a country distant from our home, and see here the effects of misrule upon the population surrounding us, and are, with our property, exposed to the hazard of piracy and plunder even at our very doors, can fully appreciate.*

Hoping soon again to see you in full health and spirits,

I am, very respectfully,

Your obliged and obedient servant,

D. N. SPOONER,
United States Vice-Consul.

Commander RINGGOLD, Esq.,
Commanding Expedition N. P. C. Seas.

(No. 21.)

(*Extract.*)

NAVY DEPARTMENT, *October 4, 1854.*

SIR:

Your communications to the Department, "referring to those numbered 16 and 17 in which you report the urgent appeals of our citizens and consuls in China, for assistance, and the course pursued by you in disposing of the vessels under your command, to afford the aid and countenance needed, the Department has no doubt that the circumstances called for prompt and decided measures, but it trusts that in affording protection to our citizens in the east, you will not lose sight of the main objects of the Government in sending to the North Pacific an Expedition for surveying purposes, and that on the return to Hong Kong, or its vicinity, of the vessels, or any one of them, of the United States East India Squadron, you will have proceeded in the prosecution

* See Letter, No. 30.

and accomplishment of the special duties assigned to you, the completion of which at the earliest day practicable, is of the greatest importance."

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

J. C. DOBBIN.

Commander C. RINGGOLD, *Commander U. S. Surveying Expedition to North Pacific Ocean, &c., Hong Kong, China.*

(No. 22.)

Extract.

WASHINGTON, June 15, 1855.

RESPECTED SIR:

"I may be permitted to say, I hope that the treatment pursued by Drs. Grier and Nickol to you during your illness and the little interest, negligence and perfect indifference manifested by them in regard to your recovery, will receive the highest censure that a Naval Court-martial can inflict."

I have the honor to remain, your obedient servant,

C. P. SENGSTACK, Jr.,

Late Hospital Steward, on board U. S. Vincennes.

Commander C. RINGGOLD, *United States Navy.*

(No. 23.)

MACAO, August 1, 1854.

SIR: In the absence of Lieut. John Rodgers, I beg to submit the accompanying letter from the Fleet Surgeon of this Expedition, for such action as you may deem fit.

I am, respectfully, your obedient servant,

H. K. STEVENS,

Acting Lieutenant Commanding.

Commodore M. C. PERRY, *U. S. N.*

U. S. Flag-ship Mississippi, Macao.

(No. 24.)

MACAO, August 1, 1854.

SIR:

I am sorry to inform you that no improvement has taken place in the case of Captain Ringgold, since my report of the 25th ultimo.

His disease is mental derangement, and in my opinion, completely unfits him for the performance of his duties as the Commander-in-Chief of a Squadron. As I am now convinced that it will be of long duration, I recommend that a Medical Survey be held upon him.

I am, very respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

WILLIAM GRIER,

Fleet Surgeon.

Lieut. Commanding JOHN RODGERS,

U. S. S. Jno. Hancock.

(No. 25.)

MACAO, August 1, 1854.

GENTLEMEN :

In accordance with the foregoing report and recommendation in the unhappy case of Commander C. Ringgold, you are directed to hold a strict and careful survey upon that officer, reporting the present condition of his health, and suggesting such arrangement as may seem to you most advisable with respect to his return to the United States.

Respectfully,

M. C. PERRY,

*Commanding East India Squadron.**Fleet Surgeon, DANIEL S. GREEN,**Passed Assistant Surgeon, L. J. WILLIAMS,**Assistant Surgeon, GERARD ALEXANDER.*

(No. 26.)

MACAO, August 1, 1854.

SIR :

In obedience to your order of this date, we have held a strict and careful survey upon Commander C. Ringgold, and respectfully report as follows, viz :

We find that he is at this time laboring under mental derangement. He had exhibited some degree of eccentricity for several months before, but no decided indications of insanity made their appearance until after a slight attack of intermittent fever, in the latter part of June. Since that time, although his bodily health has improved, the mental alienation has become more and more manifest. The probable duration of his disease is uncertain, but a restoration of sound intellect cannot be anticipated for some months, if at all.

Under these circumstances, we do recommend his immediate return to the United States; and for his greater comfort and safety, that he be sent in some public ship, where medical treatment and proper care can be rendered him; or in a clipper ship, with suitable attendants, should a medical officer be returning home from the Squadron.

Very respectfully,

Your obedient servants,

D. S. GREEN, *Fleet Surgeon,*L. J. WILLIAMS, *Passed Assistant Surgeon,*GERARD ALEXANDER, *Assistant Surgeon,*

Commodore M. C. PERRY,

*Commanding United States Naval Forces**in the East India, China, and Japan Seas.*

Approved:

M. C. PERRY,

*Commander-in-Chief United States Naval Forces**in the East India, China, and Japan Seas.*

(No. 27.)

MACAO, CHINA, *August 6, 1854.*

SIR:

I enclose herewith a copy of the report of the Board of Medical officers, who were instructed to examine and report upon your state of health.

Said medical officers have advised, that you should return to the United States in a vessel, having on board a person skilled in medicine,

As therefore the store-ship Supply, will be the first vessel to sail for home, and she having excellent accommodations, and a medical officer attached to her, you will in accordance with the recommendations of those who have reported upon your state of health, make the necessary preparations for taking passage in that vessel, and will, when she is ready for sea, embark on board of her.

Wishing you an agreeable passage, and a speedy restoration to health,

I am, sir, your obedient servant,

M. C. PERRY,

*Commander-in-Chief United States Naval Forces
in East India, China, and Japan Seas.*

CADWALADER RINGGOLD,

United States Navy.

(No. 28.)

UNITED STATES CONSULATE,

Hong Kong, July 19, 1854.

SIR:

Herewith, I send you a copy of a statement, made to me by Captain Alexander Smith, Master of the British Brig "Rapid," containing a request that an American should be sent to assist him to bring his vessel and her cargo into this Port.

I have no suggestions to make concerning his request, but deem it proper to state, that Lieutenant Commanding Henry Rolando, of the United States Brig Porpoise, has informed me that he is ready and anxious to render the desired assistance, and but awaits your orders.

I am, sir, your obedient servant,

JAMES KEENAN,

United States Consul.

Commander C. RINGGOLD,

Commanding Expedition, &c., &c., Whampoa.

(No. 29.)

CANTON, *July 21, 1854.*

SIR:

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your dispatch of the 19th instant, together with the affidavit of Alexander Smith master of

the English Brig "Rapid." While if there was any probability that the Brig is in existence, I would cheerfully dispatch the "Porpoise," and make an attempt to recover her, but according to the Master's statement she was wrecked on the 21st May near the mouth of an extensive river, no doubt densely populated and by this time, has been completely plundered.

I have too much respect for the distinguished admiral and Lieut. Governor to believe, that having the "Race Horse" and "Spartan" at hand if there was a probability of the Brig being yet in existence that they would dispatch even both vessels to her rescue. I hope you will agree with me, that it would be a mark of great discourtesy on my part to these gentlemen should I do that, which is clearly the legitimate duty of the British Navy with its thousand ships.

Paramount is the fact that the moment Captain Kelly's detachment reaches here, I shall be off on my own proper duties. Therefore with every disposition to accommodate, I must decline the aid asked for.

I am, very respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

CADWALADER RINGGOLD,

Commanding Expedition to China Seas, &c.

(No. 30.)

OFF WHAMPOA, *July 26, 1854.*

DEAR SIR:

As Commodore Perry sends a reinforcement to Canton, this morning I have withdrawn the detachment from my ship. The Hancock will return immediately to her station; when ready to go into dock you will still have all her crew to defend you until her repairs are made. I shall keep my ship below, with the "Porpoise" and "Fenimore Cooper," actively employed in pursuit of pirates. When the dock is ready for the "Porpoise," you will still have an increase of force by her crew.*

Very respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

CADWALADER RINGGOLD,

Commanding Exploring Expedition China Seas, &c.

To D. N. SPOONER, Esq., *U. S. Vice Consul, Canton.*

(No. 31.)

MACAO, *August 10, 1854.*

SIR:

From several messages just received from you through Lieutenant Commanding Stevens, it is highly proper I should ask an interview at your early and perfect convenience.

The request is made with reference to my passage to the United States. I cannot see the propriety of being kept for weeks in the China

* See letter of D. N. Spooner, No. 20.

seas, exposed to burning heat and winds, sweltering in tropical atmospheres; thence in like weather until the Equator with the annoyances of calms, intense heat and deluges, while the route *via* San Francisco leads the invalid through a belt of seas unequaled in purity; thence to Panama, in the most propitious season for travelling over the Isthmus. In 45 days the Atlantic is gained and I seeking health, while the "Supply" is dragging her slow length along with contending elements. To my poor comprehension, I cannot perceive that there is any comparison to be drawn; I think there is some misapprehension with regard to the mode of conveyance. Doctor Grier has ever been decided as to the most rapid conveyance, and Doctor Alexander when the Board adjourned, complimented me, and stated the objections I raised to the route were sensible and well timed.

However I have not been supplied with the official report of my condemnation, and it cannot be supposed I could discuss with accuracy its bearing. An officer, in my position, I presume has a right to expect that grave matters touching his health, would be duly forwarded with copies of all necessary papers. As to the expenses, I have ample private means to carry me home, that therefore can be no obstacle. I am fully aware of my rights, and as an officer of equal authority with yourself, I claim justice at your hands, and a perfect immunity from further ignominy and indignities. I am constantly kept in a state of mental and nervous excitement, antagonistic to speedy recovery. I shall feel it to be my duty to complain to the Honorable Secretary of the position in which I have been placed, at proper time.

Understanding the Mississippi leaves on the 22d instant, I renew my request for a passage in her, to the Sandwich Islands. With all respect, Commodore, for you officially, and personally, and with a full knowledge of the respect due to obedience, I remonstrate and decidedly object to proceed to the United States in the "Supply," unless I am to be made a prisoner and chained.

I am, most respectfully,
Your obedient servant,

C. RINGGOLD.

Commodore PERRY,

Commanding U. S. Naval Forces, China and Japan Seas.

(No. 32.)

MACAO, August 24, 1854.

SIR:

As the late commander of the Expedition, and having thus far successfully conducted the enterprize before leaving for the United States, it is, I conceive, an important part of my duty to give you the plan of operations I contemplated, and which, if carried out, results may secure its usefulness in advance.

With these remarks I suggest that, when ready, the Expedition shall proceed to the reconnoissance of the east and west coasts of the Isle of Formosa, and then in order the doubtful islands and dangers south of

Japan, lying in the route to California. If time permits this duty being done, I would recommend you to return to Hong Kong *via* the Bashee group of islands, make a careful reconnoissance, and connect them with Formosa; thence to Hong Kong, not later than 1st or 15th of February; there provision, and take departure for the Sandwich Islands, in order to prepare for the duty in the Arctic regions. If time permits, the "John Hancock" and "Fenimore Cooper" might be usefully occupied, either before or after they reach Honolulu, in making a careful examination of a chain of islets and dangerous reefs in a W.N.W direction, and contiguous to the Sandwich Island group. March is the most propitious month for this duty, from my own experience in the former Expedition.

The Sandwich Islands I originally intended as the rendezvous and point of departure for the important duty in the Arctic regions. This arrangement has evident advantages, and was fully discussed with the Honorable Secretary, and therefore it should have full consideration. The close proximity with California, and the advantage of having great facility in communicating with the Navy Department, may be used as a reason for a concentration there. The men can enjoy liberty while free from temptation, and the Expedition overhauled with advantage. By adopting the plan proposed, the men will be removed from the fatal climate of China, and no interruption will occur in the general course of duty. Up to this time, all my work is in regular order. Before the Squadron reaches its destination, despatches doubtless will be there from the Department.

I recommend you to keep yourself in communication with Hong Kong.

I am, respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

CADWALADER RINGGOLD,

Late Commanding Expedition to North Pacific, &c.

Lieutenant Commanding J. RODGERS, U. S. N.,

Commanding United States Exploring Expedition.

(No. 33.)

MACAO, August 24, 1854.

SIR:

Through the hands of my Secretary a few days since, I received the report of Fleet Surgeon Grier to Lieutenant Commanding Rodgers, respecting my case and state of health, together with your order respecting the "Supply"—the report and decision of the Board of Medical Officers was not received.

Doctor Grier reports me in a state of mental derangement, rather he should have used the impressive word, *temporary*. Since the date of that communication my health has improved astonishingly and I believe I am in full possession of all my faculties. On the eve therefore of returning home I conceive it a duty, I owe myself, my family and friends, and as a faithful officer, to demand a re-survey.

The re-organization of the Navy, and other cogent reasons, point out the necessity for this course. I am fully satisfied my case has been misunderstood and improperly treated.

I am, very respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

CADWALADER RINGGOLD,

Late Commanding Expedition to North Pacific.

Commodore M. C. PERRY,

Commanding U. S. Naval Forces in the East Indies.

(No. 34.)

MACAO, *August 26, 1854.*

SIR:

Understanding with pleasure, that the difficulties among certain officers of the expedition are in progress of amicable adjustment, and aware of your determination not to convene a Court-martial, owing to a press of duty, I request to be permitted to withdraw all the reports I have previously submitted, on the subject of these difficulties.

Such cases as are not adjusted, I shall feel it my duty to lay the facts before the Hon. Secretary on my arrival, when he will be prepared to act. I refer particularly to the conduct of Lieutenant Commanding J. Rodgers. In every instance, however, I shall be governed by a strict sense of justice to the service and myself, as a faithful officer,—and I trust entirely free from any personal motives, or any considerations, other than those of a public nature.

I must urge my earnest remonstrances, as the late Commander of the Expedition, against the appointment of Lieutenant Commanding, J. Rodgers, to the command of the Expedition. I had a right to expect that more respect, and consideration would have been paid to the serious reports submitted by me, and in view of the fact of the presence of several officers fully competent to control the movements of the Expedition. I was clearly of the opinion moreover that under the instructions of the Secretary of the Navy, it was eminently proper that I should have been consulted upon the subject of my successor. I shall avail myself of the earliest occasion to lay the subject before the Hon. Secretary.

I am, very respectfully,

CADWALADER RINGGOLD.

Late Commanding Expedition to North Pacific, &c.

Commodore M. C. PERRY, &c., &c., &c.

(No. 35.)

HONG KONG, *September 3, 1854.*

SIR:

I have the honor to report that I embark to-morrow on board the *Susquehanna* for Washington *via* San Francisco.

My health is nearly restored, and but that a relapse might occur by returning too suddenly to my exposed duties, I could doubtless take

command again. I anticipate the pleasure of presenting myself to the Department about the 1st November proximo, when I shall render an account of my stewardship of the Expedition. I trust you will await my arrival before any final steps are taken upon the movements of the expedition and a commander. Should you approve, I shall desire earnestly to return, after two months' respite, and carry out the great objects of the Government.

I have drawn careful instructions for Lieutenant Commanding John Rodgers for the operations of the Expedition, copies of which I will present for your decision.

I am, sir, very respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

CADWALADER RINGGOLD,

Commander United States Navy.

Hon. J. C. DOBBIN,

Secretary of the Navy, Washington, D. C.

(No. 36.)

HONG KONG, *September 2, 1854.*

SIR:

From the marked indifference with which all my communications to you have been treated, I would not again venture to address you; but as my letter relative to the withdrawal of certain charges against several officers in the expedition late under my command, is one of much importance, I ask an early consideration.

I am, sir, very respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

CADWALADER RINGGOLD,

Late Commander of the Expedition to the North Pacific, &c.

Commodore M. C. PERRY,

Commanding United States Naval Forces

in the East India, China, and Japan Seas.

(No. 37.)

UNITED STATES STEAM FRIGATE MISSISSIPPI,

Hong Kong, September 3, 1854.

SIR:

In reply to your letter of the 2d instant, I have to remark that I deem it my duty to retain in my possession all the papers which have been addressed to me having reference to the concerns of the North Pacific Exploring Expedition.

If the Hon. Secretary of the Navy, so directs, they will be forwarded to the Department.

Very respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

M. C. PERRY,

Commander-in-Chief U. S. Naval Forces

East India, China and Japan Seas.

Commander CADWALADER RINGGOLD,

United States Navy.

(No. 38.)

MACAO, August 25, 1854.

GENTLEMEN :

I enclose herewith a communication from Commander Ringgold, who, as he declares to me, is exceedingly anxious to have the medical report in his case so revised or modified as to authorize his return to Washington *via* California, and to take passage in the *Susquehanna* to sail in a few days for San Francisco.

As I can have no control over the decision of a medical report after it has been duly approved, it will be for you, gentlemen, if you deem any revision of your report expedient, to inform me upon the subject, and I will give the necessary instructions to re-assemble the Board.

Commander Ringgold has a strong repugnance to take passage in the *Supply*, though that vessel has excellent accommodations—has an experienced medical officer, and is in all respects well fitted to secure a short and safe passage.

Very respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

M. C. PERRY,

*Commander-in-Chief U. S. Naval Forces
in the East India, China, and Japan Seas.*

*Fleet Surgeon DANIEL S. GREEN,
Passed Assistant Surgeon L. J. WILLIAMS,
Assistant Surgeon G. ALEXANDER.*

(No. 39.)

UNITED STATES STEAMER MISSISSIPPI,
Macao Roads, August 26, 1854.

SIR :

Your communication of the 25th instant has been received and considered. In recommending that Commander Ringgold should return to the United States in the mode indicated in our report, it was with the view of his being properly attended, both medically and otherwise, during the passage home. As these objects can be attained in the *Susquehanna*, and afterwards in the steamers *via* Panama, (for we understand that they carry physicians on board,) and as in other respects it is desirable and advantageous that he should take this route; we therefore recommend that he do return to the Eastern United States by it.

We are, very respectfully,

Your obedient servants,

D. S. GREEN, *Fleet Surgeon.*L. J. WILLIAMS, *Passed Assistant Surgeon.*GERARD ALEXANDER, *Assistant Surgeon.*

Commodore M. C. PERRY,

*Commanding United States Naval Forces
East India, China, and Japan Seas.*

Approved :

M. C. PERRY, *Commanding East India Squadron.*

(No. 40.)

UNITED STATES STEAM-FRIGATE MISSISSIPPI,
Hong Kong, September 5, 1854.

SIR:

I have the honor to transmit herewith duplicates of first and second medical surveys in the case of Cadwalader Ringgold.

It gives me pleasure to say that the general health of this officer was much improved when he left yesterday in the "Susquehanna" for California.

With great respect,

I have the honor to be your obedient servant,

M. C. PERRY,
*Commander-in-Chief U. S. Naval Forces
 East India, China, and Japan Seas.*

HONORABLE JAMES C. DOBBIN,
Secretary of the Navy, Washington, D. C.

(No. 41.)

UNITED STATES STEAM-FRIGATE MISSISSIPPI,
Hong Kong, August 30, 1854.

SIR:

Instead of taking passage in the "Supply," as was before contemplated, you will please report to Commander Franklin Buchanan for a passage home in the United States Steam-frigate Susquehanna under his command.

Wishing you, an agreeable passage and a speedy restoration to health,

I am, sincerely,

Your friend and obedient servant,

M. C. PERRY,
*Commander-in-Chief U. S. Naval Forces
 East India, China, and Japan Seas.*

COMMANDER RINGGOLD,
United States Navy.

(No. 42.)

NEW YORK, *December 9, 1854.*

SIR:

I have the honor to report my arrival here, last from Hong Kong *via* California, under the circumstances which I presume have been communicated to the Department by Commodore Perry.

Notwithstanding the sweeping and inconsiderate opinion of the Medical Board of officers, in their condemnation of me, and the ill-judged assertion of probable permanent *insanity*, the enclosed correspondence will, I trust, satisfy you of the fallacy of their predictions, and the gross injustice inflicted on me. If there were any thing wanting to convince the most sceptical of my entire restoration, a refutation, ample, will be found upon presenting myself to the Department, or

before a Board of medical gentlemen conscientious and correct in their judgment and duty. At the earliest moment I will lay before you, for your liberal and just consideration and action, serious complaints against Commodore Perry, and particularly the Medical Board, who pronounced upon a *perfect stranger* to them in the manner set forth in their opinion. It is respectful and proper for me now only to say I have been subjected to the greatest indignity and humiliation, and my pride, self-respect, and ambition, severely wounded in a manner antagonistic with my duty and common decency. I owe it to myself and the Navy to bring the whole subject of my return, and the conduct of the officers mentioned, before the President and yourself, having full confidence in your enlightened justice and judgment. I shall hasten the preparation of a detailed statement, trusting I may be able to bring all the facts before you, without prejudice, and in a spirit of candor characteristic of an officer knowing his rights, and the high tribunal to which he appeals.

I am, very respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

CADWALADER RINGGOLD,

Late Commander Exploring Expedition to China Seas, &c.

Hon. J. C. DOBBIN,

Secretary of the Navy, Washington, D. C.

(No. 43.)

UNITED STATES STEAMER "SUSQUEHANNA,"

Hong Kong, September 4, 1854.

SIR :

I beg leave to inform you that, by direction of Commodore Perry, I take passage to the United States in this ship. It is deemed necessary, in consequence of a Medical survey held on me, (a copy of which is herewith enclosed for your information,) based upon the report of Wm. Grier, fleet surgeon of the Expedition, also annexed. I had hoped that in compliance with my request, and in conformity with prudence a report of all the circumstances attending my sickness would have been promptly forwarded to the Department, and a copy sent to you, as the surgeon of the ship, under whose care I was to return home.

When I look back to my partial attack of sickness and the very careless and negligent manner in which the case was treated, I am not surprised that I was subjected to "momentary delirium, or alienation of mind." I remember to have suffered most painful agony from a spasmodic sickness, which I suppose must have originated in a functional derangement of the stomach and consequent high excitement of the nervous system, added to the inconvenience of two chills and frequent febrile tendency. The spasmodic affection continued increasing, until my power of speech was partly interrupted causing me to stammer and I suffered great pain and lost strength. A small dose of morphine was administered, which only aggravated my disease. Finally I drank of my own accord several tumblers of hot water, which caused me to throw up much viscid acrid bile, and a quantity of gas, and highly inflamed matter. From this moment I felt great relief and the spasms gradually ceased. No medicine was administered subsequently, except

a dose of blue pills and Congress water, while I sojourned at the residence of the Rev. P. Parker, Canton, until I had at Macao, a very slight chill when Dr. Nickol directed me to take a dose of blue mass. (See No. 18.) Two doses were taken with an aperient and from that moment I date my recovery, my appetite and strength, returned and with a tonic of gentian and the free use of the cold bath, I soon resumed my usual daily exercise, extended and increased as it was to several miles.

I can imagine a slight attack of intermittent fever unattended to might assume an aggravated form and prove serious or fatal. I believe this to have been the case with me, I am sure the case would have readily yielded in three or four days to skillful just treatment. What I have stated with regard to the treatment I received is true, *perfectly true*. The opinion expressed by the Fleet surgeon of the Expedition in his report, and the attending condemnation, I view in no other light than as an *outrage*, it is an utter perversion of a simple intermittent case of fever, distorted into one of decided insanity or mental derangement, with previous eccentricity.

The three medical officers comprising the Board are all strangers to me, I have never had intercourse with them, and I am at a loss to comprehend, except from prejudicial hearsay how they could be aware of any eccentricity in my conduct. If, perhaps, ardent, careful devotion to duty, and strict attention to discipline comfort and all orders may be classed among the eccentricities in an officers character,—then I may plead guilty to the charge.

From Macao, under date of 24th August, (letter annexed, No. 29,) as a faithful officer, I asked of Commodore Perry a re-survey, finding I was fast returning to my wonted vigorous health: my request was not granted. Dr. Green called for a few moments to see me, only after I made application for and in connection with my passage in this ship.

I must not omit to remark that but two of the Board called to see me on the occasion of the survey referred to, Dr. Green, and I think Alexander, no questions were asked, or any means taken to test the depth of my reported alienation, much less any interrogatories respecting my health, feelings, or general condition. I presume the time consumed in this *mock survey*, did not exceed two or three minutes.

After these tedious preliminary remarks, I beg leave to ask you to examine closely into my case during the passage, and see whether you can discover any *eccentricity* in my character, much more insanity. If I know myself, I never enjoyed more perfect health than I do at this moment,—calm repose, good appetite and a mind free from care, I enjoy in an eminent degree.

I think the opinion of the Board harsh, unjust, and cruel, and made up with an indecent and inconsiderate haste, not at all in unison with professional responsibility and judgment.

I request your attention to my letter to Commodore Perry, as when I leave the ship at San Francisco, I shall ask your candid opinion upon all the circumstances of my case as coming under your notice, particularly my state of health during the passage, and when I joined the ship. I would be glad to have the opinion also conjointly of your very intelligent assistant Dr. Fahs.

I am returning home about to present myself to the Department, under a cloud and at a moment when the Navy is about to be re-organ-

ized. Under the certificate as it stands unless I can refute it, and prove its cruelty and injustice, I may offer to my friends the poor consolation, the alternative of an obscure *retirement* for myself, when in fact, I am, in the prime of life.

I am, with sincere respect,

Very truly yours,

C. RINGGOLD,
U. S. Navy,

To Surgeon J. S. MESSERSMITH,
U. S. Steamer "Susquehanna."

(No. 44.)

U. S. STEAM FRIGATE "SUSQUEHANNA,"
HARBOR OF SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA,
November 16th, 1854.

SIR :

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your communication, dated Hong Kong, September 4th, 1854, informing me of your late indisposition in China, accompanied also by a copy of the decision of the Board of Medical Officers, who were ordered to examine and report upon your condition.

I learn from their statement as well as your own, you suffered from an attack of fever, consequent upon exposure in a malarious district, and the temporary mental aberration which supervened, I consider by no means a rare or anomalous symptom incident to the disease.

That such an alienation would be permanent, I must confess I can recognize no satisfactory reason for its continuance after the removal of its cause, but the conviction is forced upon my mind that the restoration of physical, would be speedily followed by intellectual health. From the time of our departure from Hong Kong, until our arrival in this port, I have had opportunities to daily see you, and observe how unerringly the opinion I had entertained in relation to your physical and intellectual improvement has been corroborated.

I am satisfied your health now, in every respect, is unimpaired, and precisely such as it had been before your attack of fever, in China.

I am, very respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

JOHN F. MESSERSMITH,
Surgeon United States Navy.

To Commander C. RINGGOLD,
United States Navy.

(No. 45.)

NAVY DEPARTMENT, *June 8, 1855.*

SIR :

Commander Ringgold was detached from his command of the expedition to the North Pacific &c., in consequence of a report of a Board of Medical Officers, dated August 1, 1854, in the following words :

"We find that he is at this time laboring under mental derangement. He had exhibited some degree of eccentricity for several months before,

but no decided indications of insanity made their appearance until after a slight attack of intermittent fever in the latter part of June. Since then, although his bodily health has improved, the mental alienation has become more and more manifest. The probable duration of his disease is uncertain, but a restoration of sound intellect cannot be anticipated for some months, if at all.

"Under these circumstances we do recommend his immediate return to the United States; and for his greater comfort and safety, that he be sent in some public ship, where medical treatment and proper care can be rendered; or in a clipper-ship, with suitable attendants, should a medical officer be returning home from the Squadron."

For reasons deemed sufficiently weighty by the Department, as well as in pursuance of the request of Commander Ringgold, it is considered proper to inquire into the present state and condition of his mind. I have, therefore, appointed yourself, and Surgeons, Cornick and Dillard, to assemble in Washington, D. C., on Tuesday 12th inst., to adopt such proceedings, as in your judgment may be expedient to enable you to inquire into and report to the Department your opinion of the present state and condition of his mind.

I am, respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

J. C. DOBBIN.

Surgeon WM. WHELAN,

Chief of the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery.

(No. 46.)

WASHINGTON, D. C., June, 13, 1855.

SIR:

Agreeably to your instructions of the 8th inst., the undersigned assembled on the 12th inst. to consider the subject therein proposed, viz: "to inquire into and report to the Department your (our) opinion of the present state and condition of mind" of Commander Ringgold, of the Navy.

The investigation was commenced by a protracted conversation with Commander Ringgold, of quite three hours duration, and was subsequently continued by conferences with Mr. Steuart, late secretary to Commander Ringgold, and Purser Speiden, of our Navy; and by reference to the correspondence submitted to us by the Department.

The admissions of Commander Ringgold, with regard to his mental derangement in China, appeared to preclude the necessity of recurring to the incidents involving his return to the United States, and in our judgment narrowed the inquiry into his "present condition of mind."

It may be pertinent to remark, that the undersigned are in a measure strangers to Commander Ringgold; one has had occasional intercourse with Commander Ringgold, while in the case of the others, this interview was the first occasion of any conversation extending beyond a few words.

In the prolonged conversation held with Commander Ringgold, the undersigned could detect no evidence of insanity; his narrative was continuous and connected, his manner natural, though displaying occasionally a deep and abiding sense of injustice and injury, into the foun-

dation of which it was not felt incumbent upon us to inquire—considering our investigation confined to his actual mental condition, and not as embracing his relations as an officer of the Navy.

The undersigned could detect nothing in the manner, conduct, or language of Commander Ringgold, which would convey or sustain the idea of existing mental derangement.

We are, very respectfully,

Your most obedient servants,

W. WHELAN,

Chief of the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery.

JAMES CORNICK,

Surgeon of the United States Navy.

T. DILLARD,

Surgeon of the United States Navy.

Hon. J. C. DOBBIN,

Secretary of the Navy.

(No. 47.)

NAVY DEPARTMENT, *June 18, 1855.*

SIR:

I have the pleasure to communicate to you the intelligence that the enquiry of the Board of Medical Officers, before whom you recently appeared, has resulted in a favorable report in your case.

My chief clerk has been instructed to furnish you a copy of the report.

I am, respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

J. C. DOBBIN.

Commander CADWALADER RINGGOLD,

U. S. Navy, Washington, D. C.









